

Minisandrams strive for excellence

KATHLEEN H. FLOYD
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Although Divya Minisandram is ranked number one in her class at Shrewsbury High School, it is not only academic talent that sets her apart from her peers. She truly represents the best of Shrewsbury High School in her commitment to service, willingness to share her talents with others, and her passion for the music of her cultural heritage.

Divya actively shares her intellectual gifts with others. Her love of science and math motivated her to participate in the Science Club and the Varsity Math Team. President of the Academic Decathlon, she especially enjoyed the range of topics represented in various competitions. Additionally, she continued her tutoring this year in support for math students individually and in a lab setting.

Her volunteer service hours logged during her high school career are numerous. She consistently encouraged her schoolmates to seek similar opportunities. With a friend, Divya fine-tuned a school-wide program to acquaint students with service learning activities. Her favorite means of supporting her school was serving as a senior yearbook editor. Since sophomore year, she has employed talents in this endeavor. This year, she designed a layout that will include signatures and star signs of her senior classmates.

Outside of school, Divya's study of Indian music has allowed her to retain and reinforce her appreciation of her



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Divya, center, and her parents Venkatesh and Anuradha Minisandram spend a family moment together.

cultural heritage. Her training in South Indian classical voice instruction extends from early elementary years. Similarly, sixth grade marked the beginning of her studying North Indian vocal and keyboard music. While normally a private and reserved person, Divya chose to create a Senior Exhibition project showcasing these talents. This capstone project will allow her school community to learn more about her and her culture through her music.

Always taking the most challenging courses available at Shrewsbury High School, she will complete eight Advanced Placement courses during her secondary school career. Not shy about navigating the available technology, she chose to take one of her AP courses - Economics - through

Virtual High School, an Internet-based class.

Among eleven SHS National Merit Commended students, she was one of three selected to move to Semifinalist status. From this group, Divya was recently named a National Merit Scholar and is the recipient of a merit scholarship. Divya was admitted to Harvard College as part of the early decision process and plans to study economics and chemistry.

When she appeared before the school committee recently to accept the superintendent's award and scholarship, Divya spoke eloquently about the people in her life who had provided guidance and help along the way. Divya credits her family and teachers for supporting and inspiring her success as a high school student.

District goals update: curriculum, instruction, and assessment

JUDITH EVANS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Each year the school district establishes goals for improvement in a number of areas. A major focus area for 2002-2003 was the development of action steps related to goals in the area of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. These goals were developed in response to the question: Does the instructional program meet the educational needs of all students and result in steadily improving student achievement?

This year brought successful completion of several previously defined initiatives in the Shrewsbury Public Schools' instructional program. These included full implementation of the Developmental Reading Assessment for grades 1- 3 and the establishment of grade-level benchmarks for this key tool used to measure student literacy skills. Other focus areas included the continuation of teacher training in

the John Collins Writing Across the Curriculum program, implementation of an integrated math program at the high school, and staff development to prevent bullying behavior at the middle school. Another major professional development program helped make implementation of differentiated instruction a system-wide priority.

Another initiative continued during 2002-2003 is the Curriculum Review process, which involves a K-12 self-study to determine the strengths and challenges connected to a specific content area. This year's focus was on completion of self-studies in mathematics and science/technology. These areas will host visiting teams in 2003-2004 who will validate the self-study and make recommendations for program improvements. Additionally, the instructional technology and media services department is in the first year of self-study, and plans to host a visiting team in the fall of 2004.

As part of the district's emphasis on

using data to drive decision-making, school personnel studied several key issues this year and began related programs, including the development of individual student success plans to assist those students at risk of failing the MCAS exams and revision of the student retention policy. At the elementary level, considerable emphasis has been placed on the development of a standards-based elementary report card and the successful piloting of the new card at all grade levels.

New Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment goals will be developed for 2003-2004 by teams of administrators and school committee members who will work cooperatively on this effort during the summer months. We are pleased with the progress we have made on the 2002-2003 district goals and continue to believe that they have helped us to maintain each school's focus on improving student achievement.

Water conservation

ROBERT TOZESKI
SEWER & WATER DEPARTMENT SUPERINTENDENT

Water conservation has become an important issue for the Town of Shrewsbury, along with many other communities in Massachusetts and the Northeast. Recent drought conditions over the last two years have increased public awareness substantially on this matter. Conservation is especially important to Shrewsbury, with the increased pressures of new housing development and outdoor watering.

Water usage in town traditionally doubles each year from winter to summertime periods. This is due to outdoor watering, primarily lawn watering, which increases our daily and peak demands. This increased usage has put the town over its annual daily allowable limit for its state water management permit. The twenty-year permit, which was issued in 1990, is based on population projections, well pumping capacities and overall Blackstone River basin yields. To come into compliance, water restrictions have been in place to limit days and time for outdoor water usage. Even though our daily demand levels were lowered in 2002, more conservation is needed from all residents to further lower our demands to stay within our water withdrawal requirements. This is also critical in establishing new water sources since state approval is dependent on meeting certain town wide conservation goals.

Each person's daily decision from the length of a shower, having full loads in a washer and the amount of time watering your lawn has a ripple effect on the success of the town-wide conservation effort. Please make water conservation a part of your daily life and encourage your neighbors to do like wise. More information regarding conservation tips and information can be found on the town's web site under the water and sewer department link.

Health department

NANCY ALLEN
BOARD OF HEALTH DIRECTOR

Leaves, grass and yard waste will be picked up at the curb on your regular rubbish collection day during the following weeks in Spring 2003: MAY 12 through 16, and MAY 27 through 31. Yard waste must be in the 30 gallon paper bags and lined up at the curb by 7:00 A.M. Brush will be picked up if it is cut into four foot lengths and securely tied into bundles.

The drop-off for yard waste at the Municipal Garage at 211 South Street will be open from 8:30 to 11:30 on the following Saturdays: June 14 and 28, July 12 and 26, August 9 and 23, September 6 and 20. DO NOT leave any yard waste at the garage when the drop-off is closed.

Household products collection day: televisions, computers, propane gas tanks and mercury thermometers and thermostats will be accepted at the Municipal Garage, 211 South Street from 8:30 to 11:30 A.M. on Saturday, May 3, 2003. There will be a \$10 fee for every television and computer and a \$1 fee for every gas-grill-size propane tank. Larger tanks will be \$10. There is no charge for mercury thermometers or thermostats. These items are prohibited from disposal with your regular rubbish at the curb.

Paint (oil based only) will be collected separately in the fall. This event is for Shrewsbury residents only.



Young Colonials

The Coolidge Colonials recently presented the Shrewsbury School Committee with newly learned information on Colonial America.